

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

EXPRESSING CONCERN OVER THE FDA'S PROPOSAL TO CLOSE TESTING LABORATORIES

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 8, 2007

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to express my grave concern over what I understand to be the Federal Drug Administration's proposal to close down as many as nine regional testing laboratories.

This decision, apparently made in the fall of 2006, has been steadily attracting resistance as more people are made aware of it. It appears that the FDA's Office of Regulatory Affairs (ORA), which, among other activities, oversees the labs, plans to close between seven and nine laboratories—more than half of the current facilities, leaving only four to six labs up and running.

Madam Speaker, this nation has a spectacular technological reputation. I am proud of the work performed by the good men and women of the FDA. Everyone can understand the importance of quickly and efficiently testing dangerous materials, which is but one of the responsibilities of these laboratories. But I would like to emphasize that regional laboratories are even more important today, when an E. coli outbreak in California needs immediate attention and not days of delay because substances must be shipped across the country to a lab in New York. Recent outbreaks of tainted spinach, with immediate testing in California, proved this urgent point.

Madam Speaker, it is imperative that we carefully and cautiously analyze this plan to consolidate our testing labs into a handful of regional centers. President Colleen M. Kelley of the National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU), which represents more than 5,200 FDA employees, has expressed her concern that FDA employees are not being properly considered in this radical transition plan to close labs this spring. The targeted laboratories are located in Philadelphia; Denver; Detroit; Alameda, California; Lenexa, Kansas; San Juan, Puerto Rico; and Winchester, Massachusetts. My understanding of the plan is that these operations, along with an estimated 250 employees, would be moved to five multi-purpose "mega-labs" geared to handle all types of FDA testing. Common sense tells us that our testing response will be altered greatly with fewer laboratories. Common sense also tells us that many loyal Federal employees will be facing drastic changes, including termination.

Sen. TED KENNEDY (D-MA) and Rep. JOHN DINGELL (D-MI) have raised concerns about these FDA lab closure plans. They have received limited response to their questions. This is unconscionable, given that we all work for the same team.

Madam Speaker, in this time of heightened concern about a wide variety of levels of safety in our nation, it seems particularly troubling

to be downsizing our FDA laboratories simply for budgetary concerns. I would be gratified to learn whether or not alternatives to these lab closures have been properly explored.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JOSEPH CROWLEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 8, 2007

Mr. CROWLEY. Madam Speaker, on Monday, May 7, 2007 I was absent for three rollcall votes. If I had been here, I would have voted: "Yes" on rollcall No. 302, "yes" on rollcall No. 303, "yes" on rollcall No. 304.

I would like this inserted into the RECORD in its appropriate place.

IN RECOGNITION OF NATIONAL TEACHER DAY

HON. PATRICK J. MURPHY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 8, 2007

Mr. PATRICK J. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I am proud to rise today in honor of our nation's teachers, who every day, are inspiring people—of all ages—to dream, learn and achieve. Today, on National Teacher Day, it is important that we pause to thank educators everywhere for their service to our communities and our country. We entrust teachers with the development of our children—they are responsible for our ability to build a better future.

National Teacher Day should be an opportunity to think about the debt we owe our nation's teachers. Madam Speaker, We thank teachers for showing children the satisfaction and fulfillment of achieving their goals. We thank them for proving that learning can be fun. We thank them for contributing to the moral development of students. We thank them for guiding our children through every new challenge. But most of all, we thank teachers for dedicating their lives to inspiring and leading the next generation of Americans.

Madam Speaker, I am passionate about education because it has always been such an important part of my life. As a former educator and the brother of a schoolteacher I know how important teaching is and how rewarding it can be. I was honored to serve as an associate professor at the United States Military Academy at West Point where I was able to teach the next generation of military leaders. Just recently I saw a former student, who is now an officer in Iraq. Seeing the way he has grown as person and succeeded as a professional is truly gratifying.

All of us had teachers that changed our lives. Outside of our families, teachers are responsible for who we are and how we view the world. And the job can be tough, it can be

tiring and it can be thankless. Madam Speaker, that is why it is so important for all of us to take time to show our appreciation, not just today, but anytime we remember a lesson learned and overcome a challenge. I will take time today to think about the teachers who helped shape my life and I encourage my colleagues to do the same.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 8, 2007

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I would like to state for the record my position on the following votes I missed due to the death of my grandmother.

On Wednesday evening and Thursday May 2 and 3, 2007, I was granted an official leave of absence and thus missed rollcall votes 284 through 301. Had I been present, I would have voted "nay" on rollcall votes 288, 293, 296, 297, and 299 and "yea" on rollcall votes 284, 285, 286, 287, 289, 290, 291, 292, 294, 295, 298, 300, and 301.

In addition, on May 7th I missed rollcall votes 302, 303, and 304 because of flooding in my district. My services were being utilized in the district helping fill sandbags to prevent any further flooding. I would have voted "nay" on rollcall vote 302 and "yea" on rollcall vote 303 and 304.

IT IS TIME TO CLOSE THE GUAN- TANAMO BAY DETENTION FACIL- ITY

HON. JANE HARMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 8, 2007

Ms. HARMAN. Madam Speaker, the September 11th terrorist attacks posed a defining challenge for the United States. Our Nation was savagely attacked; our peace and prosperity threatened. A swift and decisive response was necessary.

Many of us offered to work with the Administration to come up with a legal framework to guide that response. One that offered the flexibility needed to meet the challenges posed by al Qaida and 21st century terrorism, but also respected human rights and the rule of law.

Unfortunately, the Administration went its own way and failed to establish a widely accepted legal foundation for its actions. We are all now paying the price.

Nowhere are the problems created by the White House's myopic approach more apparent than at the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.